



Weekly Australian Climate, Water and Agricultural Update

29 September 2011

The full report is available from www.abares.gov.au

Summary of key issues

- Rainfall forecast for the next eight days could assist winter crops in southern Australian states, particularly where rainfall deficiencies currently exist.
- There is a cooling trend in the central Pacific Ocean that is consistent with a La-Nina event. However, the current Indian Ocean Dipole event could cause dry conditions over south-east and central Australia during spring.
- Mouse activity is likely to intensify over the warm spring and summer months.
- Water storage levels in the Murray–Darling Basin decreased this week by 49 gigalitres to stay at approximately 87 per cent of total capacity.
- The world wheat indicator price (US hard red winter, free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$309 a tonne for the week ending 27 September 2011, compared with US\$321 a tonne in the previous week.
- The world coarse grains indicator price (US no. 2 yellow corn free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$278 a tonne for the week ending 28 September 2011, compared with US\$295 a tonne in the previous week.
- Saleyard cattle price movements for the week ending 23 September 2011 were mixed. The Queensland trade steer indicator price rose 6 cents per kilogram to 369 cents per kilogram. Trade steer prices also rose in South Australia, but fell in all other states. Heavy steer prices rose in all states except Victoria, while medium cow prices rose in all states except New South Wales.
- The lamb indicator price (weighted average saleyard price, Victoria, 18-22 kg, fat score 2-4) fell by almost 9 per cent in the week ending 23 September to 466 cents per kilogram.
- Apple, tomato, lettuce, melon and onion prices were higher in the week ending 24 September but banana and cauliflower prices were slightly lower.

1. Climate

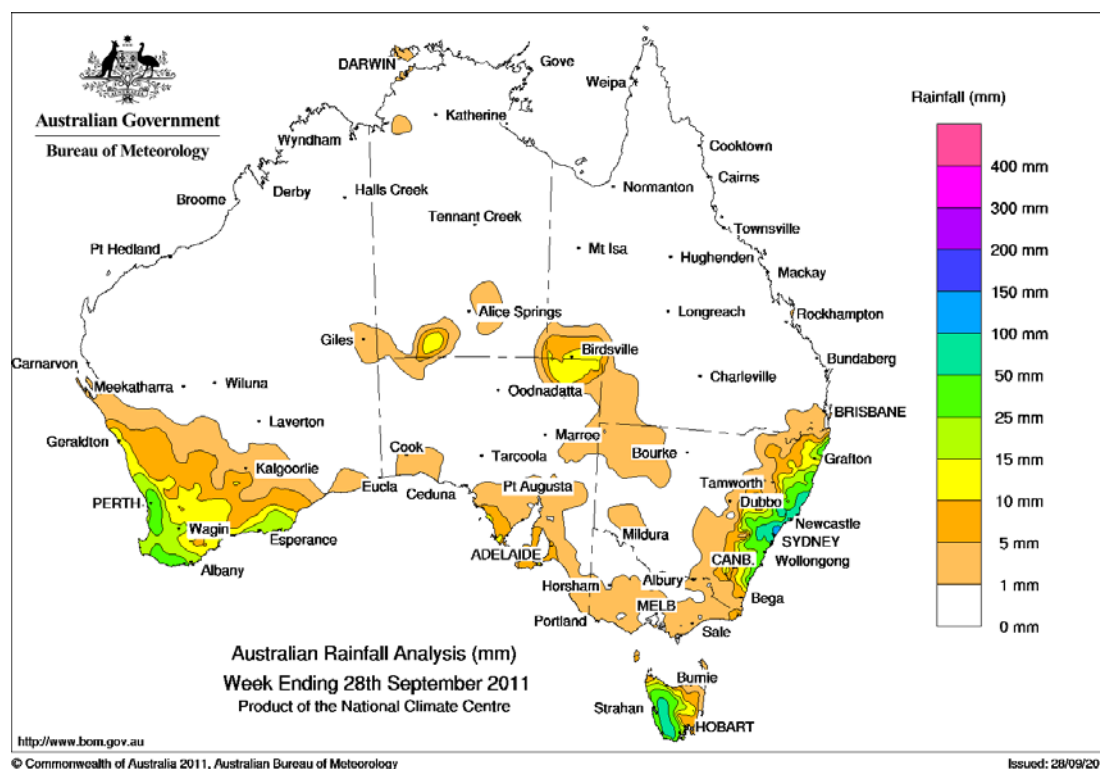
1.1. Notable events

- For the week ending 28 September 2011, rainfall was mostly received in south-west and south-east Australia. The highest measured total for the week was 202 millimetres at Wyong in the Hunter region of New South Wales.
- Rainfall forecast for the next eight days could assist growth of winter crops in southern Australian states and improve soil moisture where rainfall deficiencies currently exist.
- Recent warm weather in the South Australia's Riverland has resulted in early bud burst for grapevines in the region. Severe frost for several nights reportedly damaged maturing wheat, barley and canola crops in north-west Victoria, but the extent of any quality and yield downgrades is unknown.
- Mouse activity is likely to intensify over the warm spring and summer months. Farmers could take measures to manage the emerging mouse plague in south-east Australia.
- Fusarium wilt has been reported in watermelon crops in the Northern Territory. This soil-borne disease carries over from crop to crop and producers could manage the disease by growing resistant varieties.
- The green snail, an exotic pest, has been reported for the first time in northern Victoria. This pest damages vegetables, wheat and pastures. Biosecurity measures are being undertaken to manage the pest in New South Wales and Victoria.
- South Australian producers have begun grain harvesting as recent warm weather has resulted in crop maturity being up to two weeks earlier than usual.
- The cooling trend in the central Pacific Ocean is continuing consistent with a developing La-Nina event. In contrast, a developing Indian Ocean Dipole event could cause dry conditions over south-east and central Australia during spring (ENSO Wrap-up, Bureau of Meteorology, 28 September 2011).

1.2. Rainfall this week

For the week ending 28 September 2011, rainfall was mostly received across south-west and south-east Australia. For further information, go to www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/weeklyrain.shtml.

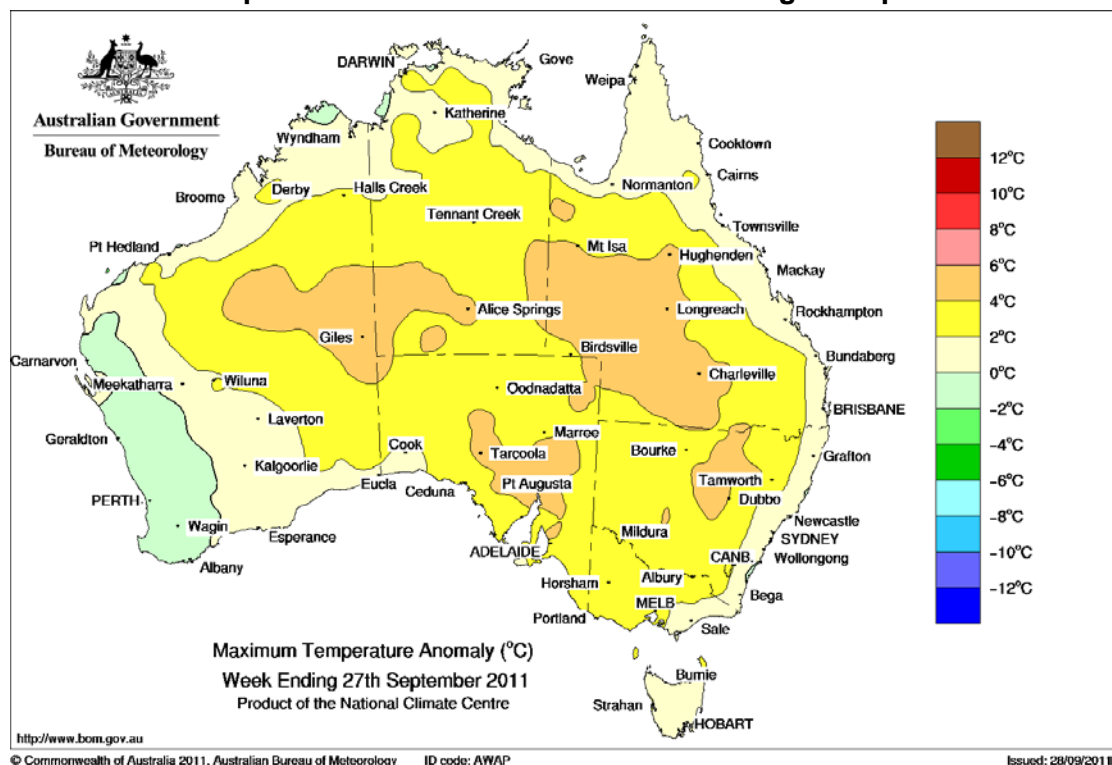
Rainfall for the week ending 28 September 2011



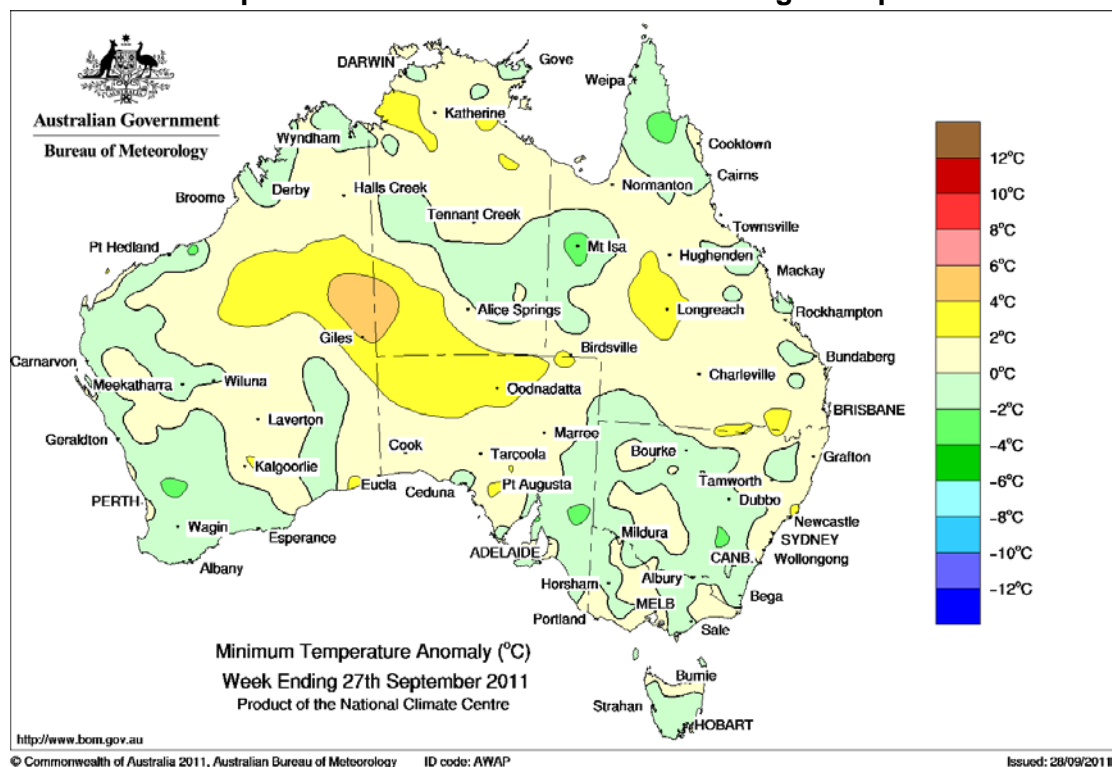
1.3. Temperature anomalies this week

Spatial temperature analyses are based on historical weekly temperature data provided by the Bureau of Meteorology. These temperature anomaly maps show the departure of the maximum and minimum from the long-term average. Temperature anomalies are calculated using high resolution gridded datasets from 1911 onwards. For further information on temperature anomalies, go to www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/.

Maximum temperature anomalies for the week ending 27 September 2011



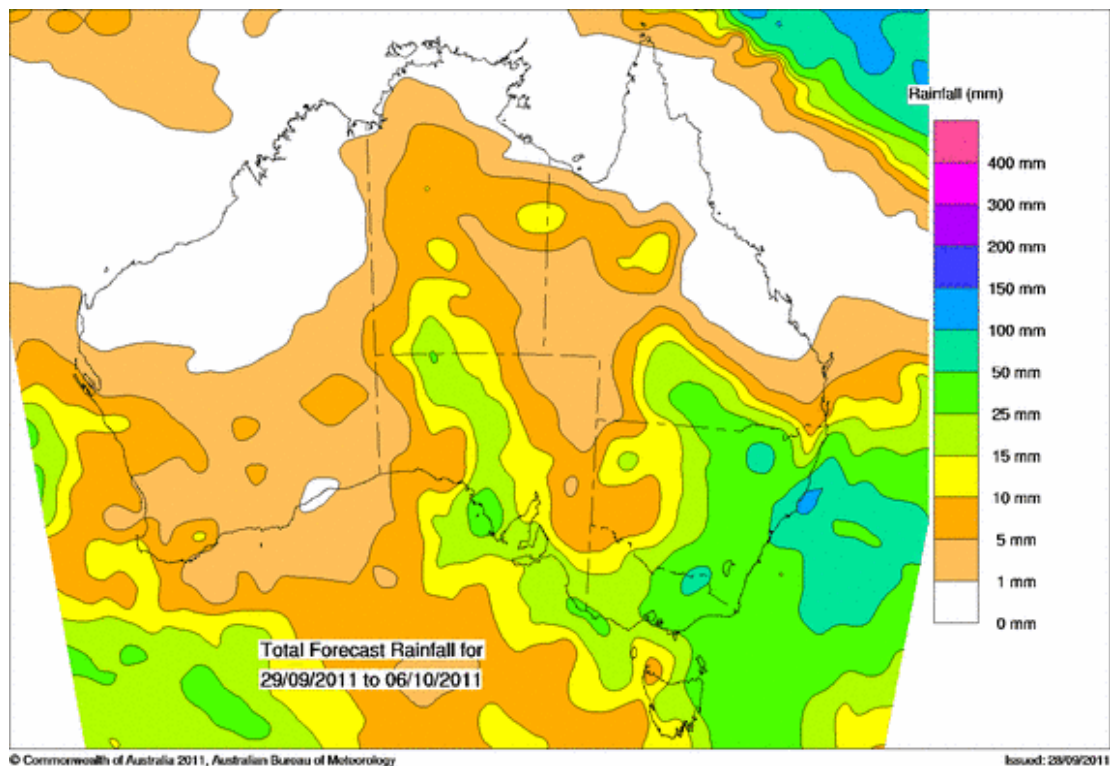
Minimum temperature anomalies for the week ending 27 September 2011



1.4. Rainfall outlook

The rainfall forecast below is produced from computer models. As it contains no input from weather forecasters, it is important to also check local forecasts and warnings by the Bureau of Meteorology.

Total forecast rainfall for the period 29 September to 6 October 2011

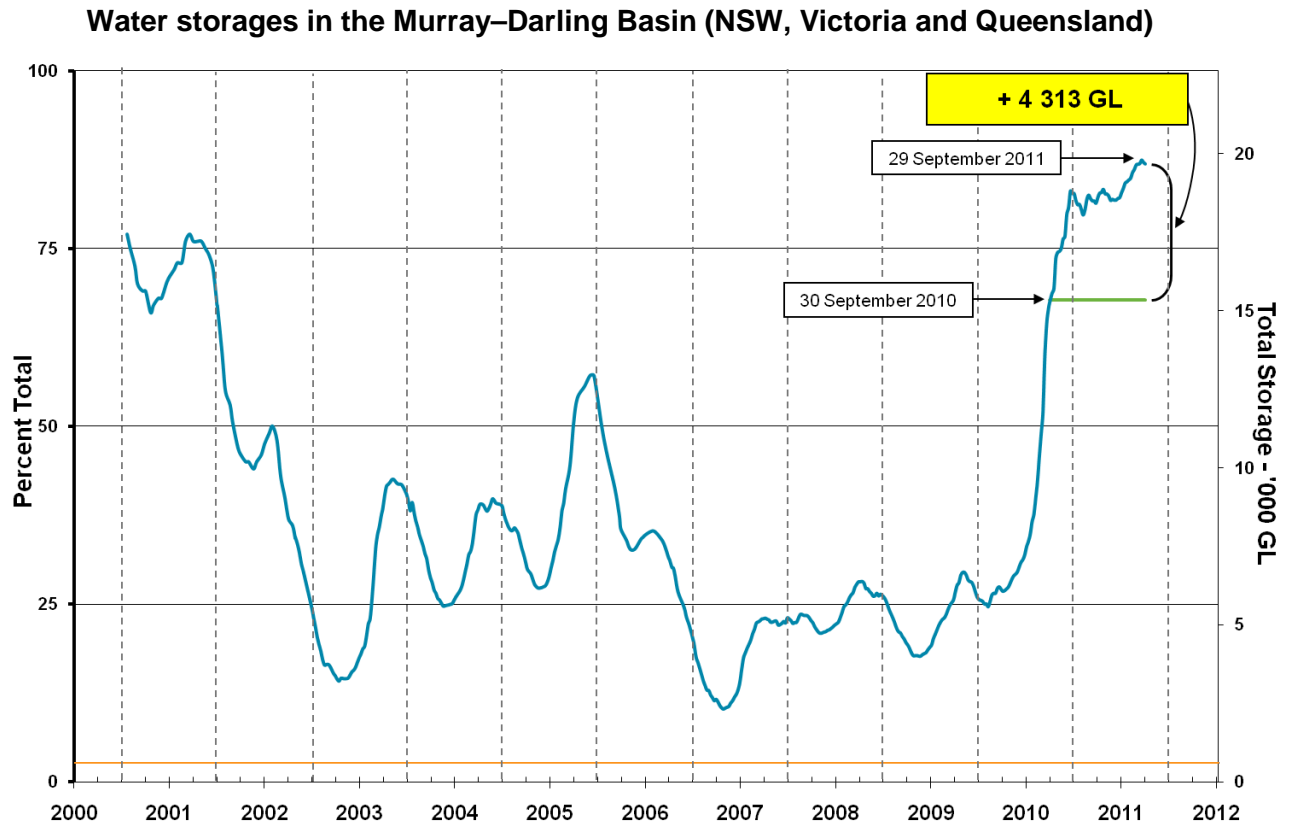


2. Water

2.1. Water availability and trading

- Water storage levels in the Murray–Darling Basin (MDB) decreased this week by 49 gigalitres (GL) to stay at approximately 87 per cent of total capacity. This is 19 percentage points or 4313 GL more than this time last year.

2.2. Water storages



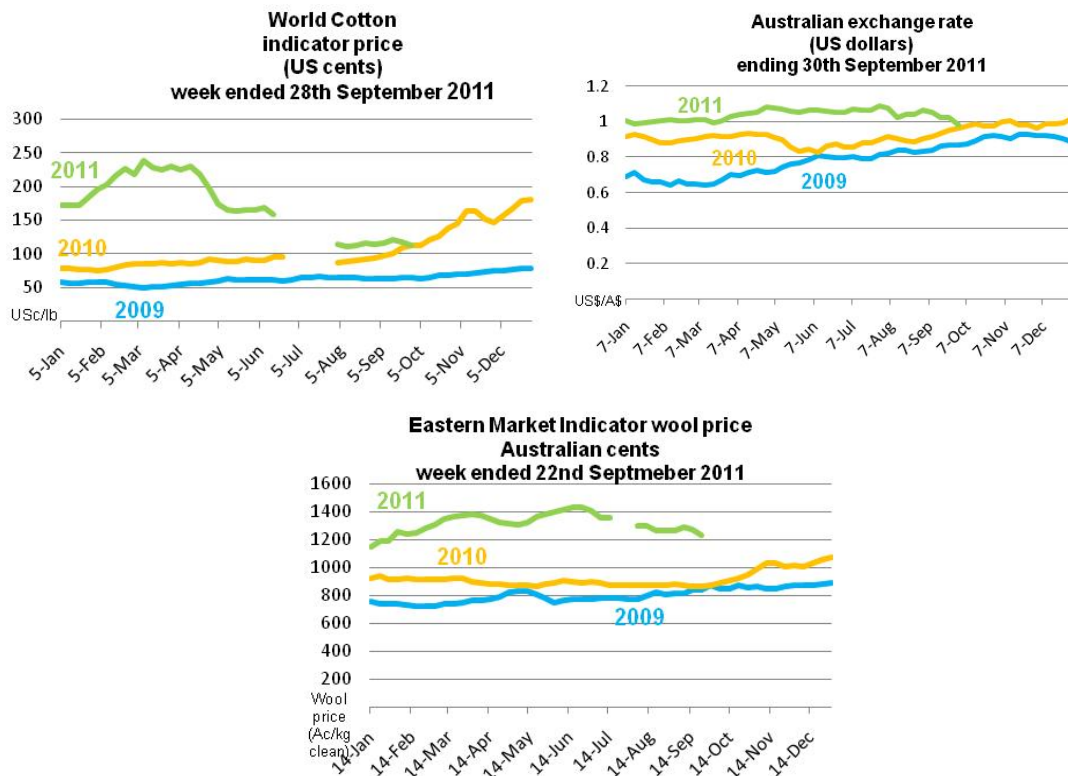
Information on irrigation water available in the Murray–Darling Basin from 1 January 2001 to 29 September 2011 is shown above. The green line indicates the storage level at the same time last year. The orange line indicates the amount of 'dead' or unusable storage.

3. Commodities

3.1. Production and commodities

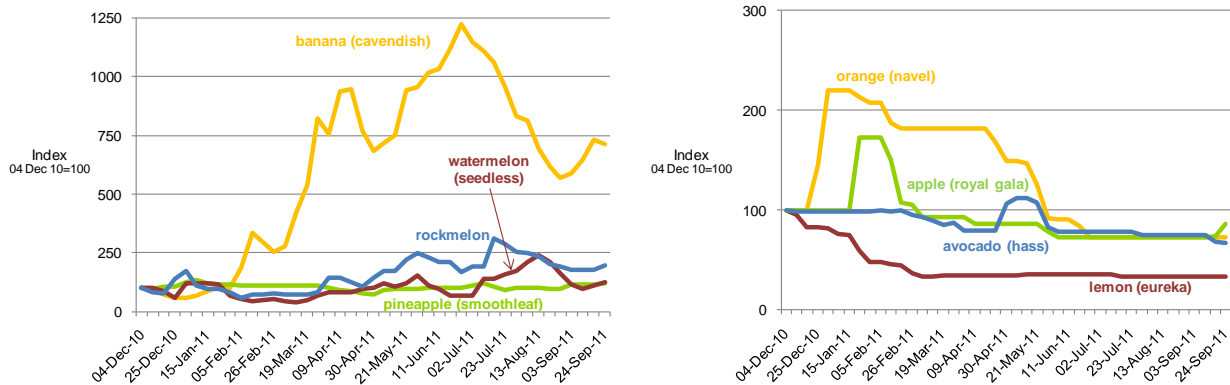
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- Saleyard cattle price movements for the week ending 23 September 2011 were mixed. The Queensland trade steer indicator price rose 6 cents per kilogram to 369 cents per kilogram. Trade steer prices also rose in South Australia, but fell in all other states. Heavy steer prices rose in all states except Victoria, while medium cow prices rose in all states except New South Wales.
- The lamb indicator price (weighted average saleyard price, Victoria, 18-22 kg, fat score 2-4) fell by almost 9 per cent in the week ending 23 September to 466 cents per kilogram.
- Banana wholesale prices eased marginally in the week ending 24 September 2011, after a period of increases, but apple and melon prices were higher.
- Tomato, lettuce and onion prices continued to increase in the week ending 24 September 2011, but cauliflower prices were slightly lower.

3.2. Selected world indicator prices

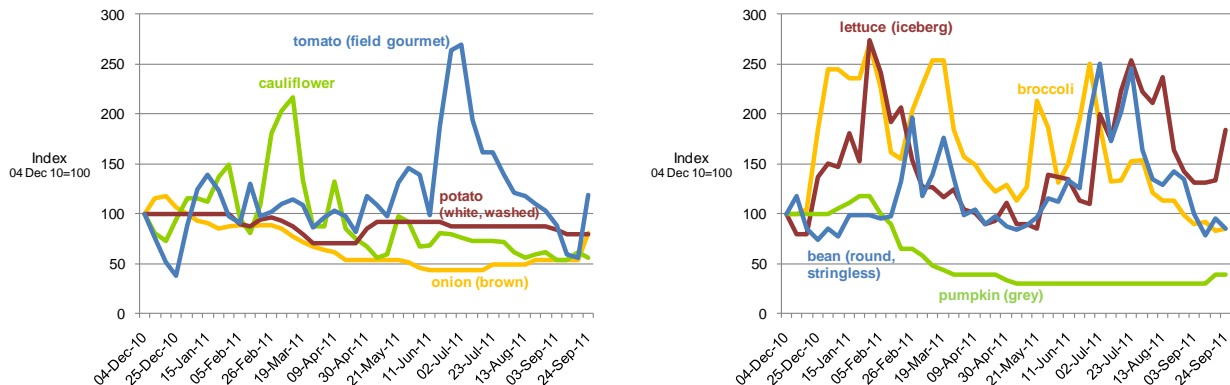


3.3. Recent movements in fruit and vegetable prices

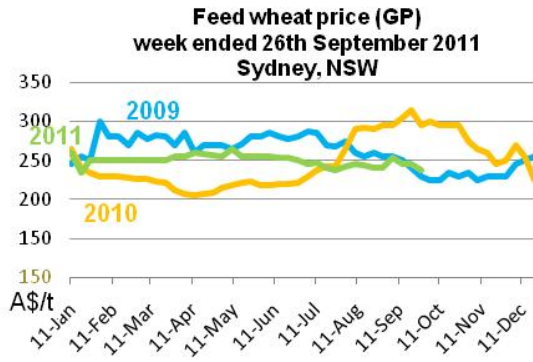
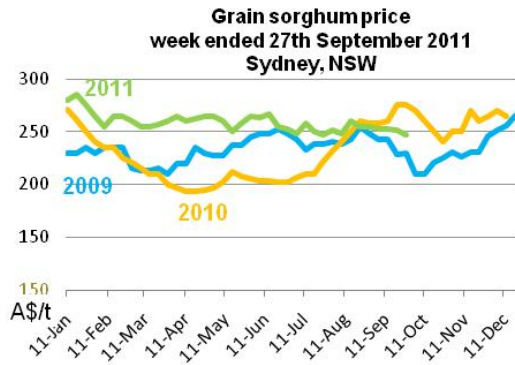
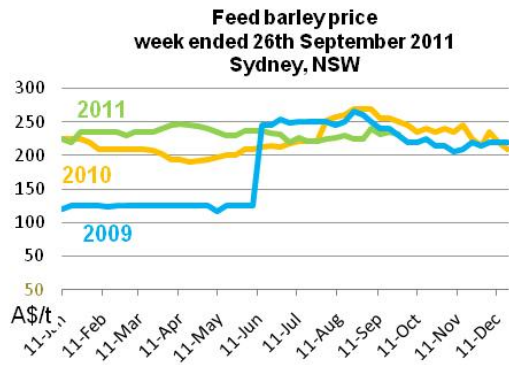
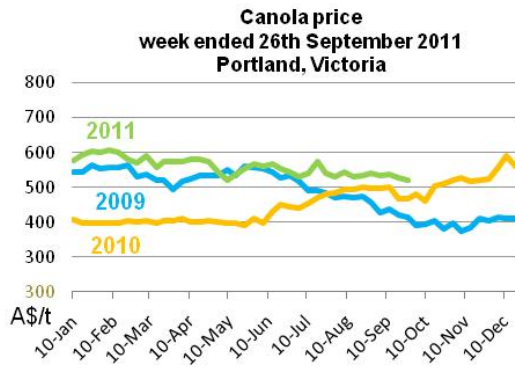
Weekly wholesale prices for selected fruit, Melbourne market



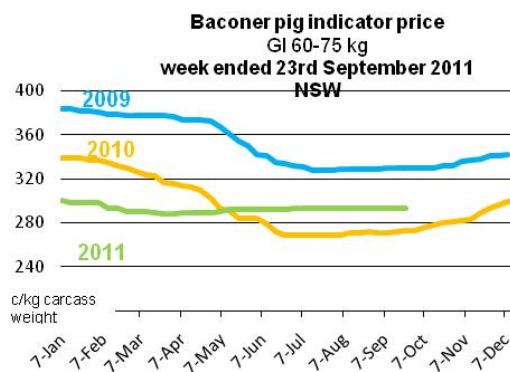
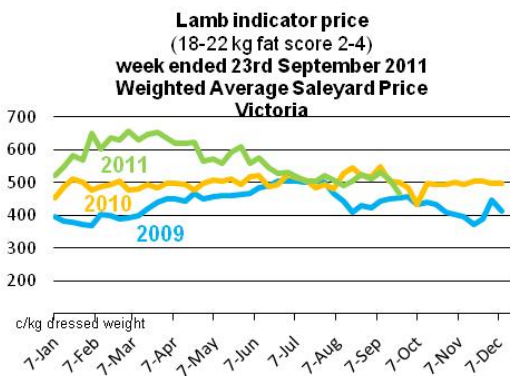
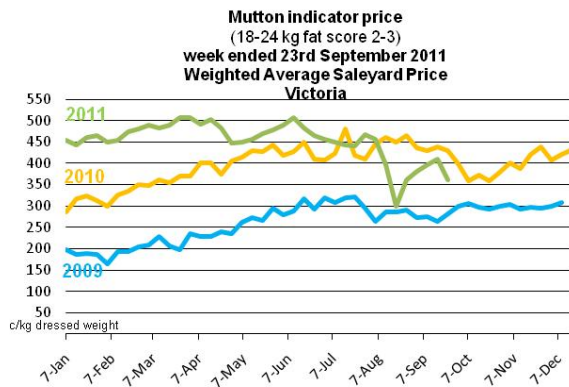
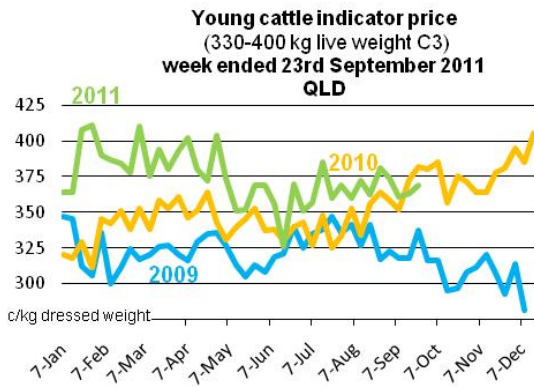
Weekly wholesale prices for selected vegetables, Melbourne market



3.4. Crop indicator prices



3.5. Livestock indicator prices



4. Data attribution

Climate

Bureau of Meteorology

- Weekly rainfall totals: www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/rain/index.jsp
- Monthly and last 3-months rainfall percentiles: <http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/>
- Temperature anomalies: <http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/>
- Rainfall forecast: www.bom.gov.au/jsp/watl/rainfall/pme.jsp
- Seasonal outlook: www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead
- Drought statement: www.bom.gov.au/climate/drought/drought.shtml
- ENSO Wrap-Up: www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/
- Soil moisture (BoM, CSIRO and the former Bureau of Rural Sciences): www.eoc.csiro.au/awap/

Water

Murray–Darling Basin

- Murray–Darling Basin Authority: www.mdba.gov.au/water/waterinstorage

New South Wales

- New South Wales Water Information: <http://waterinfo.nsw.gov.au/>
- New South Wales Office of Water, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water: www.water.nsw.gov.au/Home/default.aspx
- Available water determinations register: www.wix.nsw.gov.au/wma/DeterminationSearch.jsp?selectedRegister=Determination
- Snowy Hydro: www.snowyhydro.com.au/lakeLevels.asp?pageID=47&parentID=61&grandParentID=4

Queensland

- Sunwater: www.sunwater.com.au
- Seqwater: <http://seqwater.com.au>

South Australia

- SA Water: www.sawater.com.au/SAWater/Environment/TheRiverMurray/River+Murray+Levels.htm
- South Australian Department of Water: www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au/

Victoria

- Goulburn–Murray Water: www.g-mwater.com.au

Water trading

- Waterexchange: www.waterexchange.com.au

Commodities

Fruit and vegetables

- Datafresh: www.datafresh.com.au

Mutton, lambs, wheat, barley and grain sorghum

- The Land: hardcopy or online at <http://theland.farmonline.com.au/markets.aspx>

Cattle, mutton, lambs and pigs

- Meat and Livestock Australia: www.mla.com.au/Prices-and-markets

Canola

- Weekly Times: hardcopy